

## **Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations of Boardmembers, Commissioners, Council and City Staff**

Boards and Commissions are created by the City Council for the following general purposes:

- To advise the City Council regarding their specific areas of responsibility
- To provide an interface between the general public and the City Council
- To reconcile conflicts in viewpoints expressed by the public and provide focused and balanced recommendations to the City Council regarding issues advanced by the public
- To draw attention to, define, and explore specific community issues related to their scope of responsibilities and report these to council
- As role models of productive community activism, to encourage broad citizen participation in community concerns

Clearly, the primary role of Boards and Commissions is to advise. As such, it does not have independent authority outside of the City Council. A notable exception, however, is the Planning Commission, which does have limited independent decision making authority in a few specified areas. However, those decisions are subject to appeal to the City Council.

### **Note:**

The pages that follow lists general roles and responsibilities of the Board and Commission Members, its Chair, City Council, and Staff. This information is being provided to serve as a guide, but it is not an all-inclusive list. Members and staff are encouraged to read and become familiar with the City's rules and procedures as well as the Board or Commission's legal authorities to know and understand its roles and responsibilities.

## **Member's Role/Responsibilities**

1. Take an oath of allegiance/affirmation (to be administered by the City Clerk (or his/her designee) and sign the Code of Ethics Member's Statement following appointment.
2. File a Statement of Economic Interests (FPPC Form 700) with the City Clerk (Only for members of the Planning Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Board of Building Code Appeals)
3. Attend the Orientation facilitated by staff.
4. Understand the roles and responsibilities of membership and become familiar with the governing rules and regulations.
5. Attend regular and special meetings of their Board/Commission. In the event that you cannot attend a meeting, provide timely notification to the Chair and staff liaison.
6. Arrive at meetings on time so as not to keep other members and the public waiting.
7. Be prepared for every meeting. This would include reviewing staff reports, minutes, etc., prior to the meeting and having all referenced materials at hand during the meeting.
8. If a member has a conflict of interest on a particular matter under discussion, the member should recuse himself or herself from any discussion or action.
9. If a member receives correspondence from the public that is addressed to the appointed body, the member should submit it to the staff liaison so that copies can be distributed to all members and become an official record of the Board/Commission.
10. When speaking in public, state whether comments represent your appointed body or they represent your own views. Be clear about representing the City or personal interests. If a member appears before another government agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, the member must clearly state if his/her statement reflects a personal opinion, or if this is a majority or minority opinion of the Board or Commission. If the member is representing the Board or Commission, the member must support and advocate the official Board/Commission position on an issue, and not a personal viewpoint.
11. Correspondence should be equally clear about representation. City letterhead may be used if the member is representing the Board or Commission's official position. A copy of official correspondence should be filed with the staff liaison. It is best that City letterhead not be used for correspondence of members

representing a personal point of view, or a dissenting point of view from an official position. However, should members use City letterhead to express a personal opinion, the official Board position must be stated clearly so the reader understands the difference between the official Board or Commission position and the minor viewpoint of the member.

12. Submit a written letter to the Mayor, copies to your staff liaison and City Clerk if or when you resign.

### **Chairperson's Role/Responsibilities**

1. Presides at meetings and is a spokesperson for the Board/Commission.
2. Calls or cancels a meeting, whichever the case may be.
3. Coordinates the setting of the agenda with the staff liaison.
4. Ensures the timely start and end of meetings.
5. Ensures that consideration of items on the agenda moves along without delay.
6. Ensures that public testimony is received but not allowed to disrupt the meeting.
7. Clarifies ideas as they are discussed and repeats motions made in order that all members understand the motion. Ensures that actions are properly moved, seconded and voted upon.
8. Sees that the Board/Commission maintains focus on the issues before them and does not get off track.
9. Represents the views/opinions of the Board/Commission as a whole when speaking on its behalf.
10. Acts as the media point of contact for information regarding Board/Commission activities, in consultation with the Mayor or City Manager.

## **City Council's Role/Responsibilities**

The City Council's role, with respect to its Boards, Commissions and Committees, is:

1. To create policy for the City
2. To solicit input from individuals and groups representing the community, including their appointed Board and Commission members, in the policy creation process
3. To direct the efforts of City staff, through the City Manager, in implementing such policies

Note: Council conduct with Boards and Commissions is covered in the City's Code of Conduct for Elected Officials, adopted in April 2000. This section is provided under Tab 3 - Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, of this Handbook.

### **City Staff Liaison's Role/Responsibilities**

1. To implement Council's policies and communicate it to Boards and Commissions as appropriate
2. To assist the Boards and Commissions in conforming with the City's rules and regulations pertaining to procedures for Boards and Commissions (e.g. study issue process, work plans, etc.)
3. To research and investigate issues, and share the information gathered, with the Boards and Commissions.
4. To recommend actions to the Boards and Commissions based on their professional assessment.
5. To communicate the recommendations of the Boards and Commissions to the City Council.
6. To maintain the records of the Boards and Commissions for legal and historical purposes. Please refer to Legislative Policy 7.3.13 for agendas and notices.
7. Coordinate with the Chair to schedule meetings and make arrangements for the meeting location.
8. Coordinate the setting and preparation of the agenda with the Chair.
9. Attend scheduled meetings and prepare minutes for approval. Submit approved or draft minutes to the City Clerk's office for inclusion in the Council Agenda under Information Items Only.
10. Coordinate the preparation of, or prepare, staff reports as necessary.
11. Post the meeting agendas and notices for regular, special, cancelled, and continued meetings pursuant to the Brown Act.
12. Post agendas and minutes on the City's web site.
13. Complete quarterly attendance reports for Council information
14. Work with Boards and Commissions on annual work plans.
15. Provide information to the Board and Commission relating to City and community events.
16. Provide information to the Board and Commission relating to training conference materials/literature pertinent to the function of the Board or Commission and that funds for this purpose have been budgeted (See Policy 7.2.2).

17. Report any Board or Commission resignations to the City Clerk (provide copy of written notice).
18. Report any Board or Commission meeting cancellations due to lack of a quorum to the City Council.
19. Distribute City related mail, inquiries and issues to Boards and Commissions.